WHYTE-MELVILLE'S HUNTING·POEMS

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HUNTING POEMS AND VERSES
BY G. J. WHYTE-MELVILLE

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THE GALLOPING SQUIRE

"The gamest old varmint that ever drew breath"

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HUNTING·POEMS

BY G·J·WHYTE-MELVILLE

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS
IN COLOUR BY
G. D. GILES

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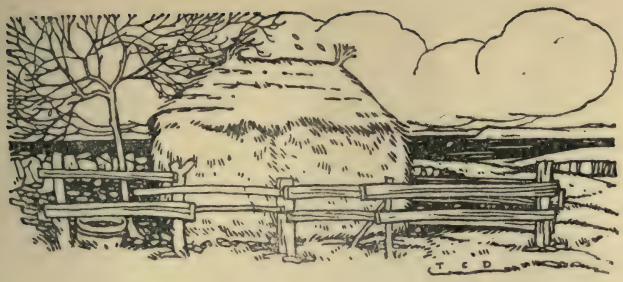

THE LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

From Water-colour Drawings by

G. D. Giles

THE GALLOPING SQUIRE . . . *Frontispiece*

Till the gamest old varmint that ever drew breath,
All stiffened and draggled, held high for throw,
O'er the squire's jolly visage, is grinning in death,
Ere he dashes him down to be eaten below.

THE LORD OF THE VALLEY . . . *page* 8

Never stand dreaming, while yonder they're streaming,
If ever you meant it, man, mean it to-day!
Bold ones are riding and fast ones are striding;
The Lord of the Valley is forward, away!

THE LORD OF THE VALLEY 16

Down go their noses, together they bustle,
Dashing and flinging, and scoring to cry.

THE GALLOPING SQUIRE 24

Then he takes the old horse by the head, and he sails,
In the wake of his darlings, all ear and all eye,
As they come in his line, o'er banks, fences, and rails,
The cramped ones to creep, and the fair ones to fly.

THE LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A RUM ONE TO FOLLOW, A BAD ONE TO BEAT *page* 32

Ere they'd run for a mile, there was room in the front,
Such a scatter and squander you never did see!

A RUM ONE TO FOLLOW, A BAD ONE TO BEAT . 40

Till we came to a rasper as black as your hat,
You couldn't see over—you couldn't see through,
So he made for the gate, knowing what he was at,
And the chain being round it, why—over he flew!
While I swore a round oath that I needn't repeat,
At this rum one to follow, this bad one to beat.

A DAY'S RIDE A LIFE'S ROMANCE 48

Till, by yonder group, dismounted,
Group that's quickly told and counted,
Hark, the pack are baying fiercely round their quarry
lying dead.

A DAY'S RIDE A LIFE'S ROMANCE 56

Every sweet must have its bitter,
And the time has come to quit her.
Oh! the night is falling darker for the happy day
that's done.

THE CLIPPER 64

A head like a snake, and a skin like a mouse,
An eye like a woman, bright, gentle, and brown,
With loins and a back that would carry a house,
And quarters to lift him smack over a town!
What's a leap to the rest, is to him but a hop,
This Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

THE CLIPPER 72

I'd a lead of them all when we came to the brook,
A big one—a bumper—and up to your chin.
As he threw it behind him, I turned for a look,
There were eight of us had it, and seven got in!

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A CATASTROPHE . . . . . *page* 80

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Now loose him ! now lift him ! Your soul what a place !
An embankment between, and a yawner each side.

THE WARD 96

We leave them in hopes they may soon be restored,
There's no time to look back in a run with the Ward.

BOOTS AND SADDLES 104

Hark ! there's a shot from the crest of the hill !
Look ! there's a rocket leaps high in the air !
By the beat of his gallop that's nearing us still,
That runaway horse has no rider, I'll swear !

HELP AND HOLD 112

The black march burn falls steep at the bank,
To the pitch of a horseman's chin,
But Hold's grey muzzle is hot on her flank,
And the white faunch deer leaps in.

THE KILL 128

HUNTING POEMS AND VERSES

THE LORD OF THE VALLEY

HUNTERS are fretting, and hacks in a lather,
Sportsmen arriving from left and from right;
Bridle-roads bringing them, see how they gather,
Dotting the meadows in scarlet and white.
Foot-people staring and horsemen preparing,
Now there's a murmur, a stir, and a shout,

Fresh from his carriage, as bridegroom in marriage,
The Lord of the Valley leaps gallantly out.

Time, the avenger, neglecting or scorning,
Gazes about him in beauteous disdain,
Lingers to toy with the whisper of morning,
Daintily, airily, paces the plain.
Then in a second, his course having reckoned,
Line that all Leicestershire cannot surpass,
Fleet as the swallow, when summer-winds follow,
The Lord of the Valley skims over the grass.

Where shall we take him? Ah! now for the tussle,
These are the beauties, can stoop, and can fly,
Down go their noses, together they bustle,
Dashing and flinging, and scoring to cry.
Never stand dreaming, while yonder they're streaming,
If ever you meant it, man, mean it to-day!
Bold ones are riding and fast ones are striding,
The Lord of the Valley is forward, away!

Hard on his track o'er the open, and facing
The cream of the country, the pick of the chase,
Mute as a dream, his pursuers are racing,
Silence, you know's the criterion of pace.
Swarming and driving, while man and horse striving,
By hugging and cramming scarce live with them still,
The fastest are failing, the truest are tailing,
The Lord of the Valley is over the hill!

Yonder a steed is rolled up with his master,
Here, in a double, another lies cast;
Faster and faster come grief and disaster,
All but the good ones are weeded at last.
Hunters so limber at water and timber,
Now on the causeway are fain to be led,
Beat, but still going, a countryman sowing
Has sighted the Lord of the Valley ahead!

There in the bottom, see, sluggish and idle,
Steals the dark stream where the willow-tree grows,

Harden your heart and catch hold of your bridle,
Steady him! rouse him! and over he goes.
Look, in a minute a dozen are in it,
But forward! hark forward! for draggled and blown,
A check though desiring, with courage untiring,
The Lord of the Valley is holding his own.

Onward we struggle in sorrow and labour,
Lurching and lobbing, and "bellows to mend,"
Each, while he smiles at the plight of his neighbour,
Only is anxious to get to the end.
Horses are flagging, hounds drooping and lagging,
But gathering down yonder, where press as they may,
Mobbed, driven, and haunted, but game and undaunted,
The Lord of the Valley stands proudly at bay.

Now here's to the Baron, and all his supporters,
The thrusters, the skirters, the whole of the tale;
And here's to the fairest of all hunting quarters,
The widest of pastures, three cheers for the Vale!
For the fair lady rider, the rogue who beside her
Finds breath in a gallop his suit to advance,
The hounds for our pleasure, that time us the measure,
The Lord of the Valley that leads us the dance!

THE GALLOPING SQUIRE

COME, I'll show you a country that none can surpass,
For a flyer to cross like a bird on the wing,
We have acres of woodland and oceans of grass,
We have game in the autumn and cubs in the spring,
We have scores of good fellows hang out in the shire,
But the best of them all is the Galloping Squire.

The Galloping Squire to the saddle has got,
While the dewdrop is melting in gems on the thorn,

From the kennel he's drafted the pick of his lot,
How they swarm to his cheer! How they fly to his horn!
Like harriers turning or chasing like fire,
"I can trust 'em, each hound!" says the Galloping Squire.

One wave of his arm to the covert they throng,
"Yoi! wind him! and rouse him! By Jove! he's away!"
Through a gap in the oaks see them speeding along,
O'er the open like pigeons, "They *mean* it to-day!
You may jump till you're sick—you may spur till you tire!
For it's catch 'em who can!" says the Galloping Squire.

Then he takes the old horse by the head, and he sails,
In the wake of his darlings, all ear and all eye,

As they come in his line, o'er banks, fences, and rails,
The cramped ones to creep, and the fair ones to fly.
It's a *very* queer place that will put in the mire,
Such a rare one to ride as the Galloping Squire.

But a fallow has brought to their noses the pack,
And the pasture beyond is with cattle-stains spread,
One wave of his arm, and the Squire, in a crack,
Has lifted and thrown in the beauties at head.
"On a morning like this, it's small help you require,
But he's forward, I'll swear!" says the Galloping Squire.

So forty fair minutes they run and they race,
'Tis a heaven to some! 'tis a lifetime to all,
Though the horses we ride are such gluttons for pace,
There are stout ones that stop, there are safe ones that fall.

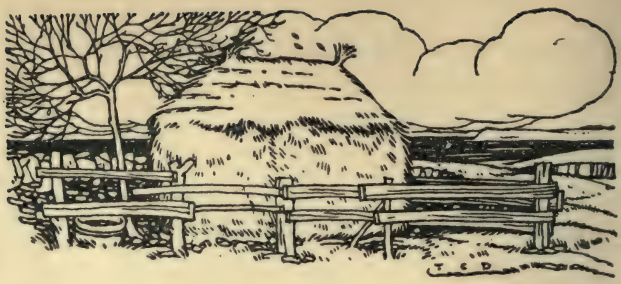
THE LORD OF THE VALLEY

"The Lord of the Valley is forward, away!"

But the names of the vanquished need never
transpire,
For they're all in the rear of the Galloping
Squire.

Till the gamest old varmint that ever drew
breath,
All stiffened and draggled, held high for a
throw,
O'er the squire's jolly visage, is grinning in
death,
Ere he dashes him down to be eaten below,
While the daws flutter out from a neighbour-
ing spire
At the thrilling who-whoop of the Galloping
Squire.

And the labourer at work, and the lord in his
hall,
Have a jest or a smile when they hear of
the sport,
In ale or in claret he's toasted by all,
For they never expect to see more of the sort.
And long may it be ere he's forced to retire,
For we breed very few like the Galloping
Squire.



"A RUM ONE TO FOLLOW, A BAD ONE TO BEAT"

COME, I'll give you the health of a man we all know,
A man we all swear by, a friend of our own,
With the hounds running hardest, he's safest to go,
And he's always in front, and he's often alone.
A rider unequalled—a sportsman complete,
A rum one to follow, a bad one to beat.

As he sits in the saddle, a baby could tell
He can hustle a sticker, a flyer can spare,
He has science, and nerve, and decision as well,
He knows where he's going and means to be there.

The first day I saw him they said at the meet,
"That's a rum one to follow, a bad one to beat."

We threw off at the Castle, we found in the holt,
Like wildfire the beauties went streaming away,
From the rest of the field he came out like a bolt,
And he tackled to work like a schoolboy to play,
As he rammed down his hat, and got home in his seat,
This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat.

'Twas a caution, I vow, but to see the man ride!
O'er the rough and the smooth he went sailing along;
And what Providence sent him, he took in his stride,
Though the ditches were deep, and the fences were strong.
Thinks I, "If he leads me I'm in for a treat,
With this rum one to follow, this bad one to beat!"

Ere they'd run for a mile, there was room in the front,
Such a scatter and squander you never did see!
And I honestly own I'd been out of the hunt,
But the broad of his back was the beacon for me.
So I kept him in sight, and was proud of the feat,
This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat!

Till we came to a rasper as black as your hat,
You couldn't see over—you couldn't see through,
So he made for the gate, knowing what he was at,
And the chain being round it, why—over he flew!
While I swore a round oath that I needn't repeat,
At this rum one to follow, this bad one to beat.

For a place I liked better I hastened to seek,
But the place I liked better I sought for in vain;
And I honestly own, if the truth I must speak,

That I never caught sight of my leader
again.
But I thought, "I'd give something to have
his receipt,"
This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat.

They told me that night he went best through
the run,
They said that he hung up a dozen to dry,
When a brook in the bottom stopped most of
their fun,
But I know that I never went near it, not I.
For I found it a fruitless attempt to compete
With this rum one to follow, this bad one to
beat.

So we'll fill him a bumper as deep as you please,
And we'll give him a cheer, for deny it who
can,
When the country is roughest he's most at
his ease,
When the run is severest, he rides like a
man.
And the pace cannot stop, nor the fences
defeat,
This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat.

"A DAY'S RIDE A LIFE'S ROMANCE"

WHEN the early dawn is stealing
O'er the moorland edge, revealing
All the tender tints of morning ere she flushes into day,
Then beneath her window, shaking
Bit and bridle, while she's waking,
Stands a bonny steed caparisoned to bear my love away;
By hill and holt to follow,
Hound and horn, and huntsman's holloa,
Follow! follow! where they lure us, follow, follow as we may!

When the chase is onward speeding,
With its boldest spirits leading,
When the red is on the rowel, and the foam is on the rein,
Far in front her form is fleeting,
And her gentle heart is beating,
With the rapture of the revel, as it sweeps across the plain;
Then I press by dint of riding
Where my beacon star is guiding,
And the laggard spurring madly hurries after us in vain.

O'er the open still careering,
Fence and furrow freely clearing,
Like the winds of heaven leaving little trace of where we pass;
With that merry music ringing,
Father Time is surely flinging
Golden sand about the moments as he shakes them from the glass;
Horn and hound are chiming gladly,
Horse and man are vying madly,
In the glory of the gallop. Forty minutes on the grass!

Till, by yonder group, dismounted,
Group that's quickly told and counted,
Hark, the pack are baying fiercely round
their quarry lying dead;
But from eyes that shine so brightly
Such a spectacle unsightly
Must be hidden, as we hide each thing of
sorrow and of dread;
So she gathers up her tresses,
And with loving hand caresses
Neck and shoulder of the bonny steed, and
homeward turns his head.

Every sweet must have its bitter,
And the time has come to quit her.
Oh! the night is falling darker for the happy
day that's done;
Now I wish I were the bridle,
In the fingers of mine idol,
Now I wish I were the bonny steed that bore
her through the run;
For I fain would still be nearest
To my loveliest and dearest,
And I fain would be the truest slave that ever
worshipped one!

THE LORD OF THE VALLEY
"Down go their noses, together they bustle"

"THE CLIPPER THAT STANDS IN THE STALL AT THE TOP"

(*Dedicated to the* HON. CHARLES WHITE, *Scots Fusilier Guards*)

Go strip him, lad! Now, sir, I think you'll declare
Such a picture you never set eyes on before.
He was bought in at Tatt's for three hundred I swear,
And he's worth all the money to look at, and more;
For the pick of the basket, the show of the shop,
Is the Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

In the records of racing I read their career,
There were none of the sort but could gallop and stay,
At Newmarket his sire was the best of his year,
And the Yorkshiremen boast of his dam to this day;
But never a likelier foal did she drop,
Than this Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

A head like a snake, and a skin like a mouse,
An eye like a woman, bright, gentle, and brown,
With loins and a back that would carry a house,
And quarters to lift him smack over a town!
What's a leap to the rest, is to him but a hop,
This Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

When the country is deepest, I give you my word,

'Tis a pride and a pleasure to put him along,
O'er fallow and pasture he sweeps like a bird,
And there's nothing too wide, nor too high, nor too strong;
For the ploughs cannot choke, nor the fences can crop,
This Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

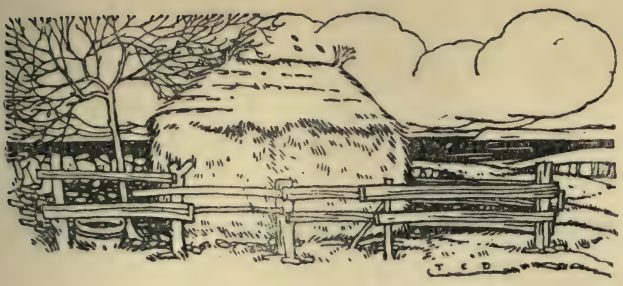
Last Monday we ran for an hour in the Vale,
Not a bullfinch was trimmed, of a gap not a sign!
All the ditches were double, each fence had a rail;
And the farmers had locked every gate in the line,
So I gave him the office, and over them—Pop!
Went the Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

I'd a lead of them all when we came to the brook,
A big one—a bumper—and up to your chin.
As he threw it behind him, I turned for a look,

There were eight of us had it, and seven
got in!
Then he shook his lean head when he heard
them go plop!
This Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

Ere we got to the finish, I counted but few,
And never a coat without dirt, but my own.
To the good horse I rode, all the credit was
due,
When the others were tiring, he scarcely
was blown;
For the best of the pace is unable to stop
The Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

You may put on his clothes—every sportsman,
they say,
In his lifetime has one that outrivals the
rest,
So the pearl of *my* casket I've shown you to-
day,
The gentlest, the gamest—the boldest, the
best—
And I never will part, by a sale or a swop,
With my Clipper that stands in the stall at
the top!



THE WARD

(*Dedicated by permission to* MRS. J. L. MORROGH)

THERE are flowers on the earth, there are gems in the sea,
There's the pearl, and the ruby—the lily, the rose,
But the emerald green is the jewel for me,
And the shamrock's the dearest of posies that grows.
For the flower and the gem are combined in the sward,
That gives pleasure and pace to a run with the Ward.

Oh! the harrier makes music that's sweet to the ear,
And the note of the foxhound rings home to the brain,

But the sport we love best is a spin with the deer,
O'er the pick of the pasture, the pride of the plain;
Where the men of the hunt, and the men of the sword,
Are at work with their spurs to ride up to the Ward.

Not a moment to lose if you'd share in the fun,
Of a gate, or a gap, not a sign to be seen!
Ere the dancers are ready, the music's begun,
To the tune, if you like it, of "Wearing the Green";
For a horse may be grassed, and his rider be floored,
In a couple of shakes, when they start with the Ward.

Now loose him! now lift him! Your soul what a place!
An embankment between, and a yawner each side,
What delivered us over alone was the pace,

Never spare when you're "on an engagement" to ride!
For the whip must be drawn, and the flanks must be scored,
If you're called on in earnest to live with the Ward.

Then forward! The hounds are still fleeting away,
How they drive for a scent—how they press for a view!
Now they have it! and strain at the flanks of their prey,
As he scuds by Dun-shaughlin and on to Kilrue;
While the field are beat off, from the lout to the lord,
For the tail of a comet's a joke to the Ward.

The boldest are baffled—the best are outpaced,
For "wreckers" and ropes, at each fence there's a call,
What with riders dismounted, and horses disgraced,
You'd think not a leap was left in us at all!

But the humours your bard hasn't breath to
record,
For disasters came thick at the pace of the
Ward.

Like fairies we whirl by the fairy-house,—see,
They are down in the gripe, and the mare's
on the man!
But a voice cometh up from the deep, and
says he,
"It's pretendin' ye are! Sure, ye're scham-
in' it, Fan!"
So we leave them in hopes they may soon be
restored,
There's no time to look back in a run with
the Ward.

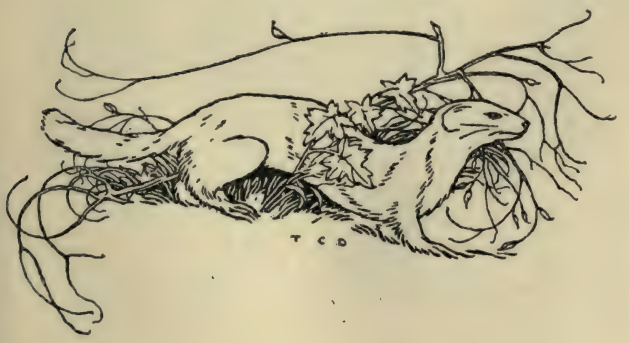
At the finish how few are there left in the
game!
And the few that are left seem well pleased
to be there,
But an Irishman rides for the sport, not the
fame,
And it's little he'll trouble, and less that
he'll care

THE GALLOPING SQUIRE

"Such a rare one to ride is the galloping squire"

For the stakes, when the pieces are swept
from the board,
It's "divarsion" he loves,—so he hunts with
the Ward.

Then success to the master! more power!
and long life!
Success to his horses, his hounds, and his
men!
And the brightest of days to his fair lady-wife!
May she lead us, and beat us again and
again!
Thus from sorrow to borrow all fate can afford,
With Morrogh, to-morrow, we'll hunt with
the Ward.



THE BULLFINCH

MY first is the point of an Irishman's tale,
My second's a tail of its own to disclose,
But I warn you in time lest your courage should fail,
If you're troubled with either the shakes or the slows,
That the longer you look at my whole in the vale,
The bigger, and blacker, and bitterer it grows!

A CAVALIER'S SONG

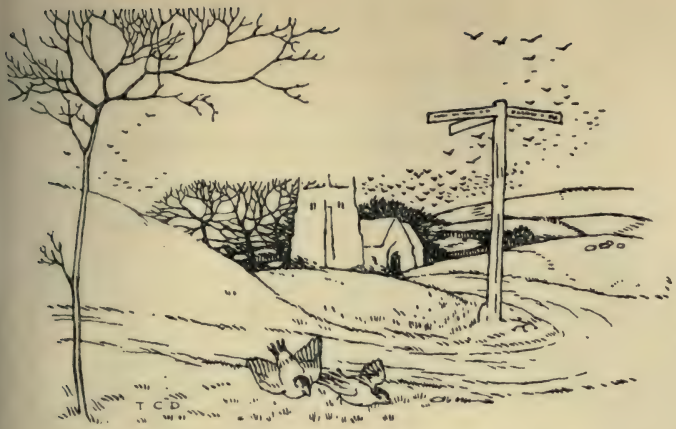
FROM "HOLMBY HOUSE"

HO! fill me a flagon, as deep as you please,
Ho! pledge me the health that we quaff on our knees,
And the knave who refuses to drink till he fall,
Why the hangman shall crop him—ears, love-locks, and all.
Then a halter we'll string,
And the rebel shall swing,
For the gallants of England are up for the King!

Ho! saddle my horses as quick as you may,
The sorrel, the black, and the white-footed bay,
The troop shall be mustered, the trumpet shall peal,
And the Roundhead shall taste of a Cavalier's steel.
For the little birds sing,
There are hawks on the wing
When the gallants of England are up for the King!

Ho! fling me my beaver, and toss me the glove,
That but yesterday clung to the hand of my love,
To be bound on my crest—to be borne in the van,
And the rebel that reaps it must fight like a man!
For the sabre shall swing,
And the head-pieces ring,
When the gallants of England strike home for the King!

Ho! crush me a cup to the queen of my heart!
Ho! fill me a brimmer, the last ere we part.
A health to Prince Rupert! Success and renown!
To the dogs with the Commons! and up with the Crown!
Then the stirrup-cup bring,
Quaff it round in a ring!
To your horses! and ride to the death for the King!



"THE MONKS THAT LIVE UNDER THE HILL"

WOULD it lighten your conscience, sweet
Leicestershire maid,
To be shriven, though guiltless of ill?
There's a snug little priory lurks in the glade,
Like a nest in a meadow, and don't be afraid,
For remorseful young ladies are quite in the
trade
Of the Monks that live under the hill.

'Tis a brotherhood zealous and pious, no
doubt,
And their duties they seem to fulfil,

By creating a good deal of racket and rout,
By despising repose and ignoring the gout,
And by keeping the steam up within and without,
These monks that live under the hill.

They are seldom in bed before Matins or Prime,
Though they often rise early for drill,
But at luncheon a "Pick-me-up" brings them to time,
Till their Vespers ring out with the dinner-bell's chime,
And by Complines, the form becomes truly sublime,
Of these Monks that live under the hill.

They are given to dancing in London, men say,
And to flirting, I'm told, with a will,
But in Leicestershire trifling like this wouldn't pay,
Where the business of life is to hunt every day,
And the nights must take care of themselves as they may,
With the Monks that live under the hill.

So their riding is reckless, their courage is high,
And regardless of cropper or spill,
Their "oxers" they rattle,—their "raspers" they fly,
At the widest of water they *will* have a shy,
And while horses can wag, it is "Never say die!"
With these Monks that live under the hill.

Till at even-song homeward like rooks they repair,
When they've ended the day with a kill,
And they'll chant you some canticles, racy and rare,
And they'll tell you some tales would make many men stare,
And they'll bid you to dine on the daintiest fare,
Will these Monks that live under the hill.

Then the Prior will press you to taste of his best,
Of the sweet, and the dry, and the still,

While the jolly Sacristan will pass you his jest,
And the Father Confessor will fill for the guest,
And you'll vow such a life is a life of the blest,
With these Monks that live under the hill.

Then long may it be so! and long may they thrive!
Uncaptured by feminine skill,
For the bachelor-bees have the best of the hive,
And our Priory-priests are too precious to wive,
And the pick of the choicest companions alive
Are the Monks that live under the hill.

A RUM ONE TO FOLLOW, A BAD ONE TO BEAT

"Such a scatter and squander you never did see"

AN ANGEL IN THE WAY

Fair the downward path is spread,
  Love and light thy coming greet,
Fruit is blushing o'er thy head,
  Flowers are springing 'neath thy feet.
Mirth and sin, with tossing hands,
  Wave thee on, a willing prey;
Yet an instant pause—there stands
  An angel in the way.

Heed the heavenly warning, know
  Fairest flowers the feet may trip;
Fruits, that like the sunset glow,
  Turn to ashes on the lip.

Though the joys be wild and free,
Though the paths be pleasant, stay!
Even mortal eye can see
An angel in the way.

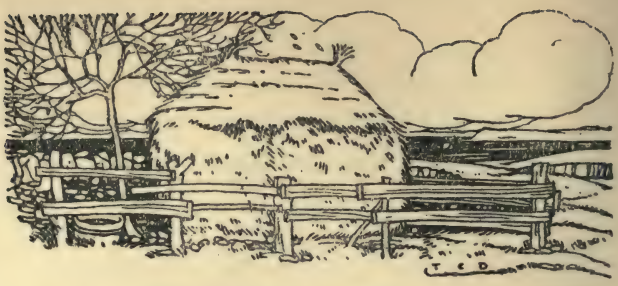
Wilt thou drown in worldly pleasure,
Wilt thou have, like him of old,
Length of days and store of treasure,
Wisdom, glory, power and gold?
Life and limb, shall sickness waste,
Want shall grind thee day by day,
Still to win thee, God hath placed
An angel in the way.

Trusting all on things that perish,
Shall a hopeless faith be thine?
Earthly idol wilt thou cherish?
Bow before an earthly shrine?
Meet rebuke to mortal love
Yearning for a child of clay,
Death shall cross thy path, and prove
An angel in the way.

When the prophet thought to sin,
Tempted by his heathen guide;

When a prince's grace to win,
Prophet-lips would fain have lied,
Even the brute the sage controlled;
Found a human voice, to say
"Master, smite me not—Behold
An angel in the way!"

So, when vice, to lure her slave,
Woos him down the shining track,
Spirit-hands are stretched to save,
Spirit-voices warn him back.
Heart of man! to evil prone,
Chafe not at thy sin's delay,
Bow thee humbly down, and own
An angel in the way.



From the "London Gazette."

VICTORIA CROSS. 7TH HUSSARS. MAJOR CHARLES CRAUFURD FRASER.

"For conspicuous and cool gallantry on the 31st December, 1858, in having volunteered, at great personal risk, and under a sharp fire of musketry, to swim to the rescue of Captain Stisted and some men of the 7th Hussars, who were in imminent danger of being drowned in the river Raptee, while in pursuit of the rebels. Major Fraser succeeded in this gallant service, although at the time partially disabled, not having recovered from a severe wound received while leading a squadron in a charge against some Fanatics, in the action of Nawabgunge, on the 13th of June, 1858."

HOW HE WON THE SWIMMER'S GOLD MEDAL AND THE VICTORIA CROSS

GLEAMING eyes, and dusky faces,
Brazen guns, depressed for slaughter,
Track of blood in furrowed places,
There the jungle, here the water;

Eager troop and opening section,
Crash of grape, and hiss of ball,
Trumpets at a chief's direction
Sounding the Recall.

"Turn again, we shall not heed them,
Gallant steed, so loyal and true,
Others in the rear may lead them,
We have something yet to do.
Through the wounded, through the dying,
Clear the press, and stem the rout,
In that stream a comrade's lying,
We must have him out!"

Chargers bold, and riders bolder,
None dare stem that torrent's force,
Breaking over girth and shoulder,
Sweeping downward man and horse.
In its bend the stream runs deeper,
Foes about him, friends afar,
Sheltering where the bank is steeper,
Clings the maimed Hussar.

Off with buckle, belt, and sabre!
Heedless of a crippled limb,
Scorning peril, stripped for labour,

In he dashes, sink or swim;
Now he's whirling round the eddy,
Now he battles in its roar,
Now with lengthened stroke, and steady,
Nears the other shore.

Dusky faces peering grimmer,
Fiery flashes from the wood,
Watery flashes round the swimmer
Where the bullet rips the flood;
Now to reach him, foothold gaining!
Now to drag him safely back,
Through an angry volley, raining
Death along the track!

Dusky faces blankly staring
On a prey thus lost and won;
Muttered curses, fiercely swearing,
"Allah! Allah! bravely done!"
While the hero, like a galley
Nobly freighted, stems the tide,
While a score of troopers rally
On the hither side.

Tramp of horse and death-shot pealing,
Wolfish howl, and British cheer,

Cannot drown the whisper, stealing
Grateful on the rescuer's ear.
"Wounded, helpless, sick, dismounted,
Charlie Fraser, well I knew,
Come the worst, I might have counted
Faithfully on you!"

Thus the double danger spurned he,
Bold to slay and bold to save,
Thus the meed of honour earned he,
Doubled for the doubly brave.
Badge of succour, badge of daring,
Gold and bronze, by which 'tis dross,
Next the swimmer's medal, wearing
His Victoria Cross!

"BOOTS AND SADDLES"

THE ring of a bridle, the stamp of a hoof,
Stars above, and a wind in the tree,
A bush for a billet, a rock for a roof,
Outpost duty's the duty for me!
Listen! a stir in the valley below,
The valley below is with riflemen crammed,
Covering the column, and watching the foe,
Trumpet-major! sound and be d—d!
Stand to your horses! It's time to begin,
Boots and saddles! the pickets are in!

Though our bivouac fire has smouldered away,
Yet a bit of good baccy can comfort us well,
When you sleep in your cloak there's no lodging to pay,
And where we shall breakfast the devil can tell.
But the horses were fed ere the daylight had gone,
There's a slice in the embers, a drop in the can,
Take a suck at it, comrade, and so pass it on,
For a ration of brandy puts heart in a man.

A RUM ONE TO FOLLOW, A BAD ONE TO BEAT

"We came to a rasper, as black as your hat"

Good liquor is scarce, and to waste it a sin,
Boots and saddles! the pickets are in!

Hark! there's a shot from the crest of the hill!
Look! there's a rocket leaps high in the air!
By the beat of his gallop that's nearing us still,
That runaway horse has no rider, I'll swear!
There's a jolly Light Infantry post on the right,
I hear their bugles, they sound the advance,
Faith! they'll tip us a tune that shall wake up the night,
And we're hardly the lads to leave out of the dance.
They're at it already, I hear by the din,
Boots and saddles! the pickets are in!

They don't give us long our divisions to prove,
Short, sharp, and distinct comes the word of command,
"Have your men in the saddle! be ready to move,

Keep the squadron together, the horses in hand!"
While a whisper's caught up through the ranks as they form,
A whisper that fain would break out in a cheer,
How the foe is in force, how the work will be warm;
But steady! the chief gallops up from the rear.
With old "Death or glory" to fight is to win,
And the colonel means mischief, I know by his grin.
Boots and saddles! the pickets are in,
Boots and saddles! the pickets are in!

THE FAIRIES' SPRING

THEY have stolen the child from his
father's hand,
He is missed from his mother's knee,
They have borne him away to their elfin-land
To ride in the van of a fairy band,
For a babe of the cross was he;
Fond father, meek mother, ye seek him in
vain,
Ye never shall look on your darling again.

To the mountain-side where the flowers grew
wild,
He would wander forth to play,
And the fairies had seen that winsome child,
With his golden curls and blue eyes mild,
And simple childish way;
So the elf-king caught him, "Come hither,"
said he,
"Come ride to the land of the fairies with
me!"

He thought not once of his mother's woe,
He forgot his father's home,
For they brought him a steed like the driven
snow,

And he smiled as they led him down below,
Through middle earth to roam;
And they showed him their treasure of jewels
and gold,
And they welcomed the boy, for they loved
him of old.

But the child soon pined for his mother's care,
He pined for the light of day,
He pined for the freshness of upper air,
His blue eyes ached with the blinding glare
Of their cavern's magic ray;
For the sign of the cross had been pressed
on his brow,
And he might not be thrall to the fairy folk
now.

But few that have lived with the elfin race
May visit this earth again;
No more shall he smile in his mother's face,
For his spirit hath flown to its heavenly place,
With the fairies it might not remain;
Though deeply they loved him, and hopeless,
and wild,
Was the elfin's grief for the Christian child.

They buried him down in a cavern lone,
Deep, deep in the mountain's womb,
And their tears welled up through the hard
grey stone,
To the turf above, as they made their moan
O'er the infant's early tomb;
And sweet to the thirsting lips of men
Is the spring of tears in the fairies' glen.

"POT-POURRI"

I SPIED a sweet moss-rose my garden adorning,
With a blush at her core like the pink of a shell,
And I wrung from her petals the dew-drop of morning,
And gathered her gently and tended her well;
For the bee and the butterfly round her were humming,
To whisper their flattering love-tale and fly,
And too surely I knew that the season was coming
When the flower must fade and the insect must die.

So deep in the shade of my chamber I brought her,
And sheltered her safe from the wind and the sun,
And cared for her kindly, and dipped her in water,
And vowed to preserve her when summer was done.

Though dark was my dwelling, this darling
of Flora,
This spirit of beauty enlivened the gloom;
Was it strange, was it wrong, I should love
and adore her?
Should bathe in her fragrance and bask in
her bloom?

But long ere the brightness of summer was
shaded,
My moss-rose was drooping and withering
away,
Her perfume had perished, her freshness had
faded,
The very condition of life is decay;
And now more than ever I cherish and prize her,
For love shall not falter, though beauty
depart,
And dearer to me that the others despise her,
My moss-rose is lying crushed home to my
heart.

CHASTELÂR

AS an upland bare and sere
In the waning of the year,
When the golden drops are withered off the broom;
As a picture when the pride
Of its colouring hath died,
And faded like a phantom into gloom;

As a night without a star,
Or a ship without a spar,
Or a mist that broods and gathers on the sea;
As a court without a throne,
Or a ring without a stone,
Seems the widowed land of France, bereft of thee!

Our darling pearl and pride,
Our blossom and our bride,
Wilt thou never gladden eyes of ours again?
Would the waves might rise and drown
Barren Scotland and her crown,
So thou wert back with us in fair Touraine.

A DAY'S RIDE, A LIFE'S ROMANCE

"The pack are baying fiercely round their quarry"

CHASTELÂR

WHAT need have we of beacon sheen
To warn us or to save,
With the star-bright eyes of our lovely queen
Guiding us o'er the wave?

What need have we of a following tide,
What need of a smiling sky?
'Tis sunshine ever at Mary's side,
And summer when she is by.

Her glances, like the day-god's light,
On each and all are thrown;
Like him she shines, impartial, bright,
Unrivalled, and alone.

Alone! alone! an ice-queen's lot,
Though dazzling on a throne;
Ah! better to love in the lowliest cot
Than pine in a palace, alone.

CHASTELÂR

The brightest gems in heaven that glow
Shine out from midmost sky,
The whitest pearls of the sea below
In its lowest caverns lie.
He must stretch afar who would reach a star,
Dive deep for the pearl, I trow,
And the fairest rose that in Scotland blows
Hangs high on the topmost bough.

The stream of the strath runs broad and strong,
But sweeter the mountain-rill;

And those who would drink with the fairy
throng,
Must climb to the crest of the hill.
For the moonlit ring of the elfin-king
Is danced on the steepest knowe,
And the bonniest rose that in Scotland blows,
Hangs high on the topmost bough.

The violet peeps from its sheltering brake,
The lily lies low on the lea,
While the bloom is on ye may touch and take,
For the humble are frank and free;
But the garden's pride wears a thorn at her
side,
It has pricked to the bone ere now;
And the noblest rose that in Scotland blows
Hangs high on the topmost bough.

'Twere a glorious game to have bartered all
For the bonniest branch in the bower,
And a man might well be content to fall
In a leap for its queenliest flower.
To win her indeed were too princely a meed,
To serve her is guerdon enow,
And the loveliest rose that in Scotland blows,
Hangs high on the topmost bough.

THE MAIDEN'S VOW

A WOMAN may better her word, I trow,
Now lithe and listen, my lords, to me,
And I'll tell ye the tale of the Maiden's Vow,
And the roses that bloomed on the bonny rose-tree.

The queen of the cluster, beyond compare,
Aloft in the pride of her majesty hung;
Bright and beautiful, fresh and fair,
The bevy of blossoms around her clung.

So the winds came wooing from east and west,

Wooing and whispering, frank and free;
But she folded her petals, quoth she, "I am best
On a stalk of my own, at the top of the tree."

And they folded their petals, the rosebud too,
And closer they clung as the wind swept by;
For they vowed a vow, that sisterhood true,
Together to fade, and together to die.

"Never a wind shall a rosebud wrest,
Never a gallant shall wile us away,
To wear in his bonnet, to wear on his breast,"
Rose and rosebuds answering, "Nay!"

So staunch were the five to their word of mouth,
They baffled the suitors that thronged to the bower;
Till a breeze came murmuring out of the south,
And stole home to the heart of the queenliest flower.

So she bent her beauty to hear him sigh,
And ever the brighter and fairer she grew;
What wonder then that each rosebud nigh
Should open its leaves to the breezes too?

Oh gather the dew while the freshness is on,
Roses and maidens they fade in a day;
Ere you've tasted the sweetness the morning is gone,
Love at your leisure, but wed while you may.

Winter is coming, and time shall not spare ye,
Beautiful blossom, so fragrant and sheen;
Joy to the gallants that win ye and wear ye,
Joy to the roses, and joy to their queen!

FAREWELL

FAREWELL! farewell! How soon 'tis said,
The wind is off the bay,
The sweeps are out, the sail is spread,
The galley gathers way.

Farewell! farewell! The words are light!
Yet how can words say more?
Sad hearts are on the sea to-night,
And sadder on the shore.

Farewell! farewell! Perhaps it screens
Thy triumph to be free;
Farewell! farewell! Perhaps it means
An end of all for me!

THE FAIREST FLOWER

THE painted pinks are gay and glad,
The rose is blushing red,
The lady-lily, pale and sad,
Hangs meekly down her head;
A carpet rich in countless dyes,
Marred by a single blot,
For seeking still the flower I prize,
Meets but to mock my weary eyes,
The blank where she is not!

A golden insect hums aloft,
Nor pauses in its quest;
A wind steals in, and whispers soft
Of summers in the west;
They search the garden through and through,
They try each wealthy plot,
The bee to wed, the breeze to woo,
That missing flower, and only sue
The blank where she is not!

And here and there, now low, now high,
In many a darting ring,
There shoots a shade across the sky,
The wild bird on the wing;

A DAY'S RIDE, A LIFE'S ROMANCE
"Every sweet must have its bitter"

The wild bird hurries to and fro
About each well-known spot,
That breathed her fragrance long ago,
That hath not kept one leaf to show
The blank where she is not!

I, too, must wander lonely round
An unfrequented bower,
And mourn through all the garden ground,
My early withered flower;
My hopes that foundered, freight and bark,
My changed and cheerless lot,
For still my life is cold and dark,
And still my heart is sad to mark
The blank where she is not!

HERO AND LEANDER

BARE was the shapely form of Hero's love,
Such form as woke to life the sculptor's art;
Black was the wave and wild the heaven above,
And chill the fears that curdled round her heart.

As Hero restless turned, and rose to trim
The friendly radiance of that flickering light,
And still she sighed and trembled still for him,
Far on the deep beneath the brooding night.

"Yet not so far for *him*, the strong, the brave,
Whose glad embrace nor time nor tide can bar,

Who boasts his mastery o'er the leaping wave,
Stout loving heart! 'Tis surely not so far!"

With that she summoned courage, and the flame
She fed afresh, then turned her to the door,
And starting smiled—and blushed for very shame,
A blush that left her paler than before.

For no one entered—and the marble stair
Showed wide and cheerless in her lonely tower,
And something whispered, "Can another fair
Have lured my false Leander to her bower?"

Ungenerous thought! "Why tarrieth he so long?"
Ungenerous thought! half stifled ere it grew;
The gathering waves, the current deep and strong,
The swimmer's gasping need, too well she knew.

And he was battling on the while as still
Battles the loving heart, though storms arise,
The loving heart, that strives through good and ill,
And though it fail at last, unconquered dies.

When first he plunged to meet the opposing wave,
How comely was that shape, so fresh and bright!
With vigorous strokes, its sidelong way that clave,
Exulting, godlike, in its youthful might.

The moon shone fitful down in shimmering line;
Her own Endymion was not half so fair
As he who laughed aloud to lip the brine,
And shake the sea-drops from his glistening hair.

Sweet was the Siren's voice, yet all in vain,
To lure him back she smote her sounding shell;

And wreathed her snowy arms—unheard
the strain,
Unseen the gesture, and unfelt the spell.

For Hero's glimmering beacon shone to
guide,
And Hero's voice seemed murmuring in
his ear;
Though long the watery way, and fierce the
tide,
Ere breath and sinew failed, the goal was
near.

But still the wind was freshening, and the
deep
Swelled up in whiter surges, broad and
high;
And what could strength 'gainst that resist-
less sweep,
And what was courage good for, but to die?

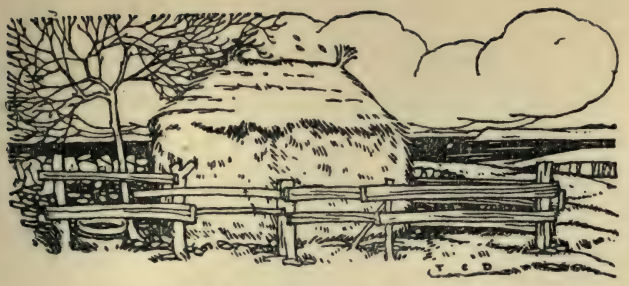
Thrice did the choking waters o'er him close,
Athwart the moon, a driving cloud sped on,
Ere it had passed, a score of bubbles rose
To spot the wrinkled wave—and he was
gone.

So Hero woke, and watched, and whiter grew,
The beacon fire died out as day drew nigh;
And on the woman's cheek a paler hue
Showed cold and sad beneath the morning sky.

The dawn flushed up. As sinking to their sleep,
In longer curve the waters heaved and rolled;
While o'er the sobs of a relenting deep,
The sunrise drew its sheet of molten gold

Another morn its shining promise gave,
Another day of Light and Life in store;
And yet a corpse was on the dancing wave,
A woman's heart was breaking on the shore.

She saw and stretched her arms; one stifled moan,
One blinding plunge, she reached Leander's side;
Cold was her darling's sleep, yet not alone,
He loved and battled, she but loved and died.



HELP AND HOLD

A LEGEND OF THE HOUSE OF ST. CLAIR

"Now fie! now fie!" quoth Robert the king—
And the red blood flew to his brow,
And the weight of his hand bade the beakers ring—
"I am ashamed this day, I trow!

"In stable and hall I have steeds and men,
I have hounds both staunch and free,
But the white faunch deer of the hawthorn glen
Makes light of my woodcraft and me!

"And I vow to St. Hubert as I sit here,
To St. Andrew, St. Rule, and St. Bride,
Till I've sounded 'the mort' o'er the white faunch deer,
No more in the woodland to ride!"

Then up and spake the bold St. Clair,
Was drinking the red wine free,
"The lands of thy vassal are scant and bare,
My liege, as they should not be.

"But had I the space by wood and wold
To breathe them a summer's day,
I'd ask but my two hounds, Help and Hold,
While I brought the white deer to bay!"

"Ye are stout," quoth the King—"ye are stout, my lord,
As behoves a St. Clair to be,
But there's many a brag at the evening board
Winna stand in the morn on the lea.

"The lands of the Strath, both far and near,
Shall be yours if her flight ye can turn,
And bring me to grips with the white faunch deer
Ere she win through the black march burn.

"But a man may not take if he dare not lose,
And the venture is yet to be said:
Should your good hounds fail, then ye shall not choose,
My lord, but to forfeit your head!"

THE CLIPPER

"A head like a snake and a skin like a mouse"

"A wager! a wager!" cried bold St. Clair;
"See, bring me both hound and horn;
Go saddle the bonny black Barbary mare,
The fleetest that feeds on corn.

"A wager! a wager! on Help and Hold!
Was never a lord of my line
But would wager his life against lands and gold;
My liege, the broad Strath shall be mine!"
. . . . . .
They saddled their steeds at mirk o' night,
They mounted when dawn was near,
And they slipped the good hounds with the dim grey light,
On the track of the white faunch deer.

The white faunch deer like an arrow flew,
The good hounds followed fast;
I trow they drove her from slot to view,
Ere noon was fairly past.

Still first in the chase rode bold St. Clair,
The Bruce spurred hard in his track,
And the foam stood white on the Barbary mare,
And the King's bonny bay grew slack.

"She fails," quoth St. Clair, "and the good
hounds gain,
St. Katherine speed their flight!
Now cote[1] her! and turn her across the plain,
For the black march burn is in sight!

The black march burn falls steep at the bank,
To the pitch of a horseman's chin,
But Hold's grey muzzle is hot on her flank,
And the white faunch deer leaps in.

Light down! light down! thou St. Clair
bold!
Or never go hunting more.
Now have at her, Help! now hang to her,
Hold!
And they turn her back to the shore.

The King's bonny bay a good bow-shot mark
Stopped short of the Barbary mare,
And the hounds stood grim and the deer
lay stark
At the feet of bold St. Clair.

[1] "Cote," a term of chase meaning to be alongside; from the French *côte—côtoyer.*

"My liege! my liege! will ye take the knife?"
The St. Clair bent his knee;
"By St. Katherine's aid, both lands and life
Have my good hounds won for me.

"And I vow to St. Katherine I'll build a shrine
In 'the Hopes'[1] by the western wave,
And I vow to St. Hubert these hounds of mine
Shall be carven in stone on my grave!"

The bold St. Clair he sleeps in Spain,[2]
For with good Lord James he had part,
When they hewed a red path through a host of slain,
To follow the Bruce's heart.

But Help and Hold, as I've been told,
May be seen in St. Katherine's chapelle;
And scion and heir of the house of St. Clair
Still love a good hound well.

[1] The chapel of St. Katherine-in-the-Hopes, built by Sir William St. Clair, early in the fourteenth century.

[2] This Sir William was slain by the Moors in Spain, while accompanying the heart of Robert Bruce to the Holy Land.

ALICE OF ORMSKIRK

Days and months drag wearily by,
Scenes and shadows, they haunt me still,
The starlit stream and the wintry sky,
And the day dying out on the crest of the hill.

And the lights astir in the town below,
There lived Alice, the frank and free;
Many a flower could Ormskirk show,
Alice alone looked kindly on me.

She could whisper, and smile, and sigh,
Pleading, flattering, so can the rest;

But oh! the light in her roving eye
Would have wiled the babe from its
mother's breast.

I freighted my bark with the rich and rare,
Alice of Ormskirk! all for thee,
Little I reckoned of cost or care,
But I launched her out on a summer sea.

A summer sea, and a smiling sky,
Never a ripple, and never a frown,
Never a token of shipwreck nigh.
What did it matter? The bark went down.

For though I was rugged, and wild, and free,
I had a heart like another man;
And oh! had I known how the end would be,
I would it had broke ere the play began.

I would it had broke ere I sued in vain,
Ere Alice grew cold and cruel to me;
But though I was dizzy and sick with pain,
I turned from her bower as haughty as she.

Alice of Ormskirk! could ye not spare?
Never I bore ye a thought of ill;

Alice of Ormskirk, false and fair!
You have darkened my life! Must I love
you still?

Oh! better for me that a blind-born child,
Never a line I had learned to trace,
Than thus by a look and a laugh beguiled,
To have read my doom in fair Alice's face.

And better for me to have made my bed
Under the yews where my fathers sleep,
Calm and weary, at rest with the dead,
Than have given my heart to fair Alice
to keep.

Night by night must I pace the shore,
Longing, lingering to and fro,
Questioning, "May I not see her once
more?"
Alice of Ormskirk answering "No!"

And still the echoing sea-cave rings
Its one unceasing pitiless strain,
And still the wild wave dashes and sings,
"Never again love—never again!"

GRISELDA

For though her smile was sad and faint,
And though her voice was low,
She never murmured a complaint,
Nor hinted at her woe;
Nor harboured in her gentle breast
The lightest thought of ill,
Giving all—forgiving all,
Pure and perfect still.

Confiding when the world was hard,
And kind when it was cold,
What wealth of love was stored and barred
Within that heart of gold!

Exulting every grief to share,
And every task fulfil;
Giving all—forgiving all,
Fond and faithful still.

And when to crush that patient brow
The storm-cloud broke at last,
And all her pride was shattered now,
And all her power was past,
She meekly kissed the hand that smote,
And yielded to its will,
Giving all—forgiving all,
True and tender still.

THE CLIPPER

"I'd the best of them all when we came to the brook"

IT IS NOT GOOD TO BE ALONE

In solitude the sparks are struck that bid the world admire,
Though heart and brain must scorch the while in self-consuming fire.
In solitude the sufferer smiles, defiant of his doom,
And madness sits aloof, and waits, and gibbers in the gloom.

'Tis dazzling work to weave at will from
fancy's brightest dyes,
And speed the task, ungrudging all, we have,
and hope, and prize.
But it must make the devils laugh, to mark
how, day by day,
The plague-spot widens out and spreads, and
eats the web away.
In vain the unwilling rebel writhes, so loth
defeat to own,
Turns from the day, and scorns to pray, and
couches down alone.
Oh! better far to wail aloud, on earth and
heaven to cry,
Than, like the panther in its lair, to gnash
his teeth and die.
Then help me, brother, help me! For thy
heart is made like mine,
The shaft that drains my life away is haply
winged for thine.
It is not good to stand alone the common
cross to bear,
But two or three like one must be, and God
shall hear their prayer.

THE BONNY BREAST-KNOTS

My first is for my darling's head,
  My second for her hair,
My whole, in loops of white and red,
  I bring her from the fair;
She loves it better sung than said,
  That bonny Scottish air.

R. I. P.

Rest thee, proud peerless face!
Rest thee, fair head!
There, in that other place,
Wearing each living trace,
Beauty, and scornful grace,
Peace to the dead!

Rest thee, fond wilful heart!
Where thou art fled;
Clear of the strife thou art
Ours is the living smart,
Thine is the better part,
Peace to the dead!

Rest thee, beloved one!
Well hast thou sped!
Sand of thy glass is run,
Trouble and toil are done,
Sorrow to vex thee none,
Peace to the dead!

Rest, where we lay thee deep!
In thy lone bed;
Tears never more to weep,
Vigil nor ward to keep,
Folded at last to sleep,
Peace to the dead!

LOST

'Twas yet but May, and here and there,
  Pink and white the blossoms fell,
Quivering down through the summer air,
On the shaven sward so trim and bare.
  Oh! I remember well
The very network of the tree,
And its shadows dancing on her and me.
My old love, in the garden chair,
  Looking upward soft and shy,
With her oval face and her rippling hair,
And the rich white dress she used to wear,
  And her work laid idly by.
'Tis strange to think of now, and yet
'Twere stranger, harder, to forget.

Her eyes were deep with the light of love,
And on her hands, and on her face,
Because the south wind laughed above,
The blossoms showered apace.
She chid me gently, fondly, when
Those blossoms to my lips I pressed;
But smiled her own dear smile, and then
I laid them in my breast.
My old love spoke, the words she said,
I think she could not deem them true:
"The time shall come when these are
dead,
Our love shall wither too!"
I held my peace, I bowed my head,
Ah! not for *me*, I knew.
At last I whispered, "Say not so,
My darling, we are brave and strong;
And love so linked as ours, you know,
Can strive and suffer long.
Its web may well be warped with woe,
But never crossed with wrong!"

She plied her work, beneath its modest bands
Her face was hidden in her fragrant hair,

The tears were falling on her busy hands,
And thus we parted there.

. . . . . .

The blue sea sparkles in the noontide ray,
The eastern sun is flashing fiercely down,
Here watch the hosts, and yonder, in the bay,
Lies the beleaguered town.
Hark! the alarum sounds—the French *rappel*
Collects its eager crowd the trench to fill,
Our drums are beating and our trumpets swell,
The *thin red line* is mustering on the hill.
White tents in thousands dot the wasted plain,
The canvas city, swarming like a fair,
Wakes up to life, while hungering for the slain,
A vulture hangs expectant in the air!
But laugh, and jest, and ready cheer,
And cordial gripe of hand in hand,
Would make the game of death appear
But some athletic pastime here,
In this Crimean land.
"Fall in!" the way they know too well,
The valley paved with shot and shell,
Accursed as the road to hell,
That none may travel back.

A CATASTROPHE

"Fall in! attention! steady!" so
The sergeants hurry to and fro,
The ranks are closed, the columns grow,
And winding downwards sure and slow,
File off to the attack.
While booming out above their measured tread,
That dull explosion loads the summer air;
It seems a requiem for the noble dead,
A knell that bids the living brave despair.
It ceaseth not—no respite even when
The daylight round of blood and strife is gone,
The hours come back, again, and yet again,
And ever and anon
The death-watch of a hundred thousand men
Ticks on—ticks on!
Through all the day—through all the night—
The pale moon rises from the sea,
And sheds a wan and ghostly light
On him and me.
For I was lying in the trench we made,
Wrapped in my cloak and belted with my blade,
A shattered gabion o'er my slumbers hung,
And down beside me was my comrade flung.

My comrade of a night, 'twas strange how deep,
How calm and moveless seemed that solemn
sleep.
Beneath his hand his ready firelock lay,
His coarse red garb denoted common clay;
A peasant's birth his homely form betrayed,
A peasant's peaceful lot, ere yet he made
His fatal choice—the bayonet for the spade.
I heard the mattock clink, the earthwork fall,
And yet my comrade slumbered through it all.
But hark! as if to break the spell,
The rush and whistle of a shell
Divides the midnight air.
The tools are dropped, the muskets ring,
Afoot recumbent figures spring,
From lip to lip the word they fling,
An oath, a jest, a prayer.
"Stand to your arms, my lads!" 'tis thus we
form
The living rampart it is death to storm.

But he alone seemed not to hear,
My comrade never raised his head.
I bowed me down to scan him near,
In sorrow rather than in dread;

The moon was shining cold and bright,
My living instincts told me right,
His face was fixed—his face was white!
Great God! the man was dead!
One stiffened arm was upward thrown, and
where,
Beneath the toil-worn hand his wrist was bare,
Blue on the surface of its sallow skin,
A heart, a woman's name was punctured in.
By Heaven! 'twas no unmanly tear I shed,
One common weakness linked me with the
dead,
That moment, like a flash I seemed to see
My love's white dress beneath the summer tree;
The next, with steadier pulse and calmer breath,
I took my place to meet or baffle death.

. . . . . .

"Cheer, boys, cheer!"
That old familiar strain
No longer mocked the listening ear,
Our troops were home again.
An English sun was shining bright,
And English meadows green and gold
Were all a-glitter in the light.
How could she look so calm and cold?

With wealth of leaves our tree was fair,
It shaded but a cheerless pair;
  My old love's face was pale and proud,
And I was all unused to bear
A wounded heart, and in despair,
  My sorrow cried aloud.
"Here, take them back, the tress of hair,
  The rose, the ring, the glove;
My pride shall never stoop to wear
For emblems but of friendly care
  The gifts that once were love.
And couldst thou judge me thus unheard,
  Was that thy faith, is this my due?
Though thousands backed the slanderous
      word,
  Thou shouldst have *known* me true!
Yes, take them back. I'll tell thee now,
  All thou hast been to me,
How oft to death I bared my brow,
How pure and strict I kept my vow,
  And all for love of thee!
These very blossoms in my breast,
  That once from here I bore,
Behold them, do they not attest
  The truth of him who served thee best?

Ay, mark them!" Then I swore
Her name from out my heart to wrest,
And care for her no more.
While in the mockery of the gaudy day
I laughed, and flung those withered leaves away.

She kept her eyes from off my face,
She dared not trust herself to look;
But stately, in her native grace,
Though once I thought she shook,
With calm, defiant courtesy, bending low,
She left me, answering only "Be it so."

. . . . . .

My old lost love,
Once more I stand beneath the tree;
Through branches bleak and bare above,
The wintry wind is blowing free.
The snow lies white upon the wold,
The clouds are dark behind the hill,
Around me all is blank and cold;
My heart is colder, blanker still.
Ay, mock me in your dreary mirth,
Ye spectral branches, nod and wave,
For I am left alone on earth,
And she is in her grave.

No more to ask, and plead, and vow,
Too late for pardon or amends,
I'd give my whole existence now
We two had only parted friends.
It seems so hard to think for us,
Not even hope can soften woe,
'Tis cruel to have lost her thus,
I loved her so! I loved her so!
Not even hope, yet good men say,
Hope hath no home beneath the sky,
But dwells above, and only they
Know how to live who live to die.
It must be so, and thus I bear
My stripes, and bow me to the rod,
In trust, ere long to follow where
My darling's feet the path have trod;
She surely will forgive me there,
When we have met before our God.

VOID

Gone! wholly gone! How cold and dark,
A cheerless world of hope bereft,
The beacon quenched, and not a spark
In all the dull grey ashes left.

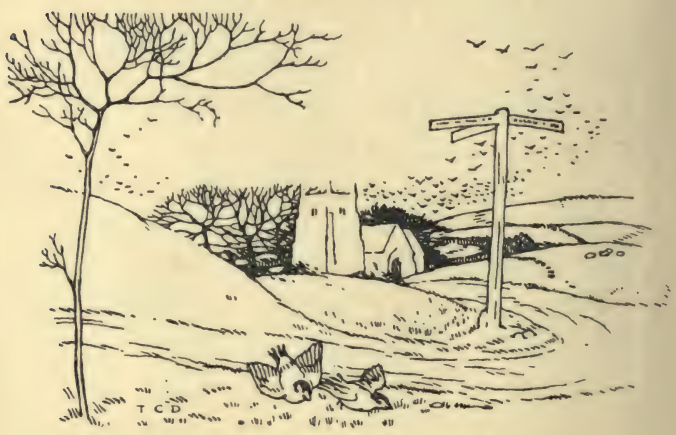
No more, no more a living part
In life's contending maze to own;
Dead to its kind, an empty heart
Feeds on itself, alone! alone!

The present but a blank, and worse,
No ray along the future cast,
All blighted by the blighting curse,
Except the past—except the past.

Ay, if the cup be crushed and spilt,
More than the sin, the loss I rue;
And if the cloud was black with guilt,
The silver light of love shone through.

And though the price be maddening pain,
One half their raptures to restore,
And live but half those hours again,
I'd pay the cruel price once more.

Dreams! dreams! Not backward flows the tide
Of life and love. It cannot be.
Well! thine the triumph and the pride,
The suffering and the shame for me.



THE WARD

"Now loose him, now lift him, your soul what a place!"

LADY MARGARET

"And grant me his life," Lady Margaret cried,
"Oh! grant but his life to me,
And I'll give ye my gold and my lands so wide,
An ye let my love go free.

"And spare me his life!" Lady Margaret prest,
"As ye hope for pardon above,
And I'll give ye the heart from out of my breast
For the life of my own true love!"

They led him forth to the silent square,
In the grey of the morning sky,
And they gave him a cup of the red wine there,
To drink, and then to die.

Without the gate Lady Margaret stood,
And she watched for the rising sun,
Till it blushed on the stone-work and gleamed on the wood,
And the headsman's work was done.

Not a limb she stirred; but when noonday's glow
Smote down on her temples bare,
A fiercer sun had not melted the snow
That streaked Lady Margaret's hair.

TRUE METAL

For this is love, and this alone,
Not counting cost nor grudging gain,
That builds its life into a throne,
And bids the idol reign.

That hopes and fears, yet seldom pleads,
And for a sorrow weakly borne
(Because it yields not words but deeds),
Can hide a gentle scorn.

In pride and pique that takes no part,
Of self and sin, that bears no taint,
The homage of a knightly heart
For a woman and a saint.

Such love will wear through shine and shower,
Such love can bear to bide its time,

Unwearied at the vesper hour
As when the matins chime.

Though hate itself be fain to shrink,
It freely ventures lose or win;
And friendship shivers on the brink,
While love leaps boldly in.

And love can strive against a host,
Can watch and wait, and suffer long,
Still daring more, when fearing most,
In very weakness strong.

Though bruised and sore it never dies,
Though faint and weary standing fast,
It never fails. And thus the prize
Is won by love at last.

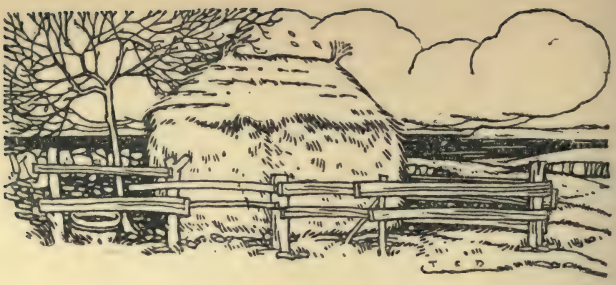
THE QUEEN OF THE ROSES

I WATCHED her in the morning hour,
So pure and fresh and fair,
A blossom bursting into flower,
That gladdened all the air.

I marked her shedding sweets around
Beneath the noontide ray,
The glory of the garden-ground,
The pride of the summer's day.

But long before the daylight's close
The southern blast awoke,
And crushed and tore the queenly rose
Beneath its pelting stroke.

Alas! her petals strew the bower;
Yet, mangled though she lie,
The fragrance of that perished flower
Floats upward to the sky.



ESPÉRANCE

THE vines are thick, the clods are brown,
Hard is the toil, thy Lord's behest,
And weak the arm, though girt the gown,
And faint the heart within thy breast;
A noonday sun pours fiercely down,
My Brother, shall we rest?

Strong is the foe, and sharp the fray,
With shivered lance and cloven shield
The champions fall, the ranks give way,
Along the front, across the field,
The stoutest knights are down. Then say,
My Brother, shall we yield?

Forbid it, honour, courage, trust!
Forbid it, all that's brave and wise!
Toil freely on, since toil you must,

The day of harvest brings the prize;
From black defeat, and crimsoned dust,
See golden victory rise!

Peace is the end and aim of strife,
The palms of Heaven are earned below;
Earth's vital powers are rich and rife,
Beneath her winding-sheet of snow;
Death is itself the germ of life,
And joy the child of woe.

Then Espérance! hope on, the fight
Is never lost, while fight we may;
At home the hearth is shining bright,
Though yet unseen along the way;
And the darkest hour of all the night
Is that which brings us day.

"THERE LEAVE THY GIFT UPON THE ALTAR"

ONCE in the promise and lustre of morning,
Little I dreamt that defeat would be mine,
Panting for trial, regardless of warning,
Love was like music, and life was like wine.
Now that the doom of the vanquished is spoken,
Now that the sun hath gone down to the sea,
Now that the heart hath been trampled and broken,
God of the helpless! I bring it to Thee.

Earth was so fair, and so lavish of treasure,
Nature emblazoned her pages in gold;

THE WARD

"There's no time to look back in a run with the ward"

Vain was the glitter, illusive the pleasure,
A phantom to vanish, a tale to be told.
Here, where the glory of summer was glowing,
See, the dead leaf quivers bare on the tree,
Blasts of a desolate winter are blowing,
God of the homeless! I shelter with Thee.

Gone the glad hope in a dawn of to-morrow,
Faded, forgotten, the noon of to-day,
Night drawing closer in sadness and sorrow,
Gloom in the valley and ghosts on the way;
All the bright hours of the past I can reckon,
Memories of anguish bequeathing to me,
Man cannot guide me, nor angel can beckon,
God of the hopeless! whom have I but
Thee?

A DIRGE

HILLS of Heaven, bright and shining,
Bid thee welcome, spirits wait,
Thronging down to greet thee, twining
Garlands at the golden gate;
See! before thee flash and quiver,
Rising in eternal light,
Daybreak on the crystal river,
And behind thee night!
Earth hath been wearing thee, now it is past,
Providence sparing thee,
Mercy preparing thee,
Angels are bearing thee homeward at last!

Quenched the bitter taste of sorrow,
  Lulled the angry throb of pain,
Glad, yet fearless of the morrow,
  Thine the bliss, without the bane.
Done with earthly trouble, taking
  Thought no more for earthly care,
Spent with earthly travail, waking
  For its wages there!
Earth hath been wearing thee, now it is past,
    Providence sparing thee,
    Mercy preparing thee,
Angels are bearing thee homeward at last!

Songs of Heaven, triumphant singing,
  Rank on rank, in waves of light,
March the immortal legions, bringing
  Crown of gold and robe of white;
Far above them, lustre streaming
  Round its towers, unbuilt by hands,
Through a mist of glory beaming,
  See, the city stands!
Earth hath been wearing thee, now it is past,
    Providence sparing thee,
    Mercy preparing thee,
Angels are bearing thee homeward at last!

NIGHTFALL

LIKE a dream the past hath fled,
All its summer glories shed;
Hope hath vanished, love is dead;
Lonely hours are mine to spend,
Watching ever, watching ever,
Waiting for the end.

Though with promise fair and bright,
Morning rose in golden light,
Ere my noon, came down the night;
Welcome to me as a friend,
Watching ever, watching ever,
Waiting for the end.

Sinking with the cruel load,
Sore and smarting to the goad,
Weary, weary of the road;
Heaven to me thy respite send!
Watching ever, watching ever,
Waiting for the end.

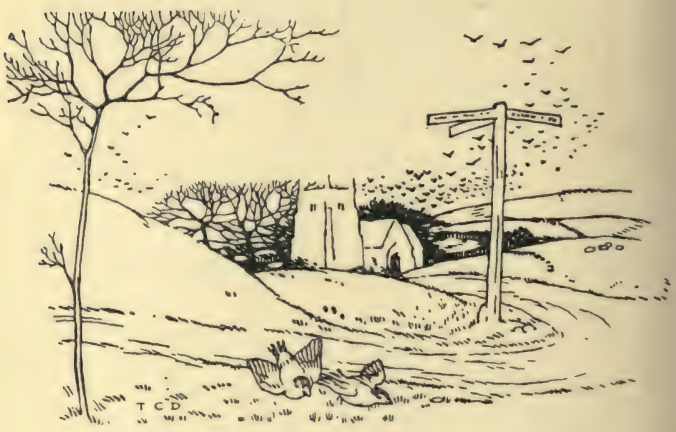
EPHEMERAL

IT came with the merry May, love,
  It bloomed with the summer prime,
In a dying year's decay, love,
  It brightened the fading time;
I thought it would last for a life, love,
  But it went with the winter snow,
Only a year ago, love,
  Only a year ago!

'Twas a plant with a deeper root, love,
  Than the blighting eastern tree,
For it grew in my heart, and the fruit, love,
  Was a bitter morsel to me;
The poison is yet in my brain, love,
  The thorn in my breast, for you know
'Twas only a year ago, love,
  Only a year ago!

It never can bloom any more, love,
  For the plough hath passed over the spot,
And the furrow hath left its score, love,
  In the place where the flowers are not.

'Tis gone like a tale that is told, love,
Like a dream it hath fleeted, although
'Twas only a year ago, love,
Only a year ago!



COMMUNE MALUM

FEW the days so dark and dreary,
But are brightened by a gleam,
Seldom night so long and weary,
But 'tis lightened with a dream ;
So the fruit that never ripens
Blossomed once for me,
Far away in bonny Scotland,
Down by the sea.

Pale and calm the wave was sleeping,
Pale and soft the skies above,

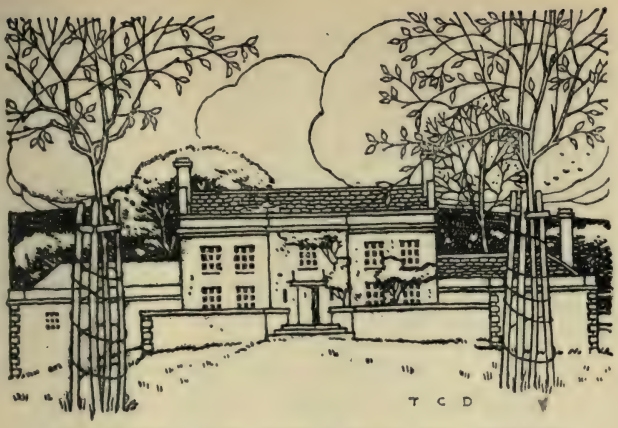
All was peace, and all in keeping
With the holy hush of love;
While the pearl of price beside me
Promised mine to be,
Far away in bonny Scotland,
Down by the sea.

Pearl I never thought could fail me,
Jewel of my darker lot,
How shall faith and truth avail me?
All dishonoured and forgot.
Would that death had come between us,
While we yet were free,
Far away in bonny Scotland,
Down by the sea.

Better that than shame and sorrow,
Trust betrayed and spirit strife,
Longing night and lonely morrow,
Are not these but death in life?
All the heart I had lies buried,
There let it be!
Far away in bonny Scotland,
Down by the sea.

BOOTS AND SADDLES

"That runaway horse has no rider, I'll swear"



VALERIA'S DEATH IN THE COURT OF THE TEMPLE

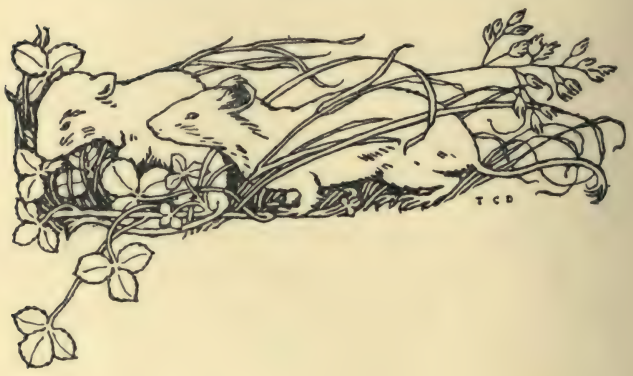
VOL. III. OF "THE GLADIATORS"

THE hand I love hath dealt the blow,
It is not hard to die like this;
I never thought such joy to know,
That these poor lips to thine should grow,
And all my soul to meet thee flow
In one impassioned parting kiss.

The hand I love, 'tis mine at last,
I press it to my sinking breast;
The tide of life is ebbing fast,
The game played out, the lot is cast,
The day gone down, the journey past,
And nightfall brings eternal rest.

The hand I love, 'twas hardly won,
Thou canst not prize it, girl, too high;
'Tis freely given, my task is done,
The thread of fate is wound and spun,
The tempest lulls at set of sun,
And I can lay me down to die.

Dear hand I love, a long farewell!
Remorse and shame I scorn to own;
Though hard she fought and low she fell,
Pride could not bid her love rebel,
And now her dying gasp shall tell,
Valeria's heart was thine alone.



THE WHITE WITCH

HAVE a care! she is fair,
The White Witch there;
In her crystal cave up a jewelled stair;
She has spells for the living would waken the dead,
And they lurk in the line of her lip so red,
And they lurk in the turn of her delicate head,
And the golden gleam on her hair.

Forbear! have a care
Of that beauty so rare;
Of the pale proud face and the queen-like air,
And the love-lighted glances that deepen and shine,
And the coil of bright tresses that glisten and twine,

And the whispers that madden, like kisses or wine,
Too late! too late to beware!

Never heed! never spare!
Never fear! never care!
It is sweeter to love, it is wiser to dare!
Lonely and longing, and looking for you,
She has woven the meshes you cannot break through;
She has taken your heart, you may follow it too,
Up the jewelled stair, good luck to you there!
In the crystal cave with the witch so fair,
The White Witch fond and fair!

FORGET ME NOT

FORGET me not, though I repine
Because you've found a fresher heart,
To give it all that once was mine,
I'll say, farewell, and part!

Because you've found a fairer face,
A nobler name, a lovelier lot,
I'll meekly bow, and yield my place,
But oh! forget me not.

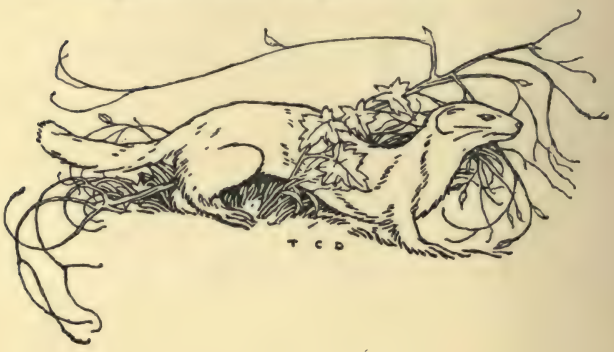
For all the world you've been to me,
And half the world you take away;
The joy of summer from the tree,
The glory from the day.

To leave a dead year's barren curse,
A dead leaf whirling on the lawn,
A soulless, starless night, and worse,
A hopeless, helpless dawn.

Not much I sought. I had my dream,
Dear love, your very words I quote,
"A rose, the ripple of a stream,
A blue sky and a boat."

But roses fade as roses blow,
And summer skies can lower and frown,
The stream runs deep and dark, and so
This boat of ours went down.

Hard, hard, to learn the common task!
Hard, hard, to bear the common lot!
For pity's sake, 'tis all I ask,
Forget me not, forget me not!



ON A SKETCH, BY AUGUSTUS LUMLEY, ESQ., OF A CAVALIER'S WIDOW LOOKING AT HER HUSBAND'S PORTRAIT

SO bright a gleam, so dear a dream,
So few the happy years!
A loving past, too fair to last,
And nothing left but tears.

Melts into space, thy portrait's grace,
As daylight into gloom,
The wreath I braid must droop and fade
Ere it can deck thy tomb.

What have I left, of thee bereft?
My darling bright and brave,
But long lone hours, dead hopes and flowers,
A picture and a grave!

"IMBUTA"

THE new wine, the new wine,
It tasteth like the old,
The heart is all athirst again,
The drops are all of gold;
We thought the cup was broken,
And we thought the tale was told,
But the new wine, the new wine,
It tasteth like the old!

The flower of life had faded,
The leaf was in its fall,
The winter seemed so early
To have reached us, once for all;
But now the buds are breaking,
There is grass above the mould,
And the new wine, the new wine,
It tasteth like the old!

The earth had grown so dreary,
The sky so dull and grey,
One was weeping in the darkness,
One was sorrowing through the day;
But a light from heaven gleams again,
On water, wood, and wold,

HELP AND HOLD

"The black march burn falls steep at the bank"

And the new wine, the new wine,
It tasteth like the old!

For the loving lips are laughing,
And the loving face is fair,
Though a phantom hand is on the board,
And phantom eyes are there;
The phantom eyes are soft and sad,
The phantom hand is cold,
But the new wine, the new wine,
It tasteth like the old!

We dare not look, we turn away,
The precious draught to drain,
'Twere worse than madness, surely now,
To lose it all again;
To quivering lip, with clinging grasp,
The fatal cup we hold,
For the new wine, the new wine,
It tasteth like the old!
And life is short, and love is life,
And so the tale is told,
Though the new wine, the new wine,
It tasteth like the old.

"RIDING THROUGH THE BROOM"

THERE'S music in the gallery,
  There's dancing in the hall,
And the girl I love is moving
  Like a goddess through the ball.
Amongst a score of rivals
  You're the fairest in the room,
But I like you better, Marion,
    Marion, Marion,
I like you better, Marion,
    Riding through the broom.

It was but yester morning,
The vision haunts me still,
That we looked across the valley,
As our horses rose the hill.
And I bade you read my riddle,
And I waited for my doom,
While the spell was on us, Marion,
Marion, Marion,
The spell was on us, Marion,
Riding through the broom.

The wild bird carolled freely,
The May was dropping dew,
The day was like a day from heaven,
From Heaven, because of you;
And on my heart there broke a light,
Dispelling weeks of gloom,
While I whispered to you, Marion,
Marion, Marion,
While I whispered to you, Marion,
Riding through the broom:

"What is freer than the wild bird?
What is sweeter than the May?
What is fresher than the morning,
And brighter than the day?"

In your eye came deeper lustre,
On your cheek a softer bloom,
And I think you guessed it, Marion,
Marion, Marion,
I think you guessed it, Marion,
Riding through the broom.

And now they flutter round you,
These insects of an hour,
And I must stand aloof and wait,
And watch my cherished flower;
I glory in her triumphs,
And I grudge not her perfume,
But I love you best, my Marion,
Marion, Marion,
I love you best, my Marion,
Riding through the broom.

THE PROUD LADYE

"'Tis a cheerless morn for a gallant to swim,
And the moat shines cold and clear,
Sir Knight, I was never yet baulked of my whim,
And I long for the lilies that float on the brim,
Go, bring me those blossoms here!"
Then I offered them low on my bended knee,
"They are faded and wet," quoth the Proud Ladye.

A jay screamed out from the topmost pine,
That waved by the castle wall,
And she vowed if I loved her I'd never decline
To harry his nest for this mistress of mine,
Though I broke my own neck in the fall;
Then I brought her the eggs and she flouted me,
"You would climb too high," said the Proud Ladye.

The lists were dressed and the lances in rest,
And the knightly band arrayed,
'Twas stout Sir Hubert who bore him best,
With a queen's white glove carried high on his crest,
Till I shore it away with my blade.
But I reeled as I laid it before her. "See,
It is soiled with your blood," said the Proud Ladye.

"You have sweet red lips, and an ivory brow,
But your heart is as cold as a stone,
Though I loved you so fondly and truly, now

I have broken my fetters and cancelled my vow,
You may sigh at your lattice alone;
There are women as fair who are kinder to me,
Go look for another, my Proud Ladye!"

Her tears fell fast, she began to rue,
When she counted the cost of her pride.
Till she played and lost it she never knew,
The worth of a heart that was loving and true;
And she beckoned me back to her side.
While softly she whispered, "I love but thee!"
So I won her at last, my Proud Ladye.

"JOHN ANDERSON"

THINE eyes are meeker, sadder now,
  Though softly still they shine,
And on thy staid and gentle brow
  I trace the thoughtful line.

Thy voice is dearest of music still,
  Though its tones are hushed and low;
While deep to my heart those accents thrill,
  As they thrilled to it long ago.

And here and there a silver thread
  Amongst thy locks I spy,
Where the hand of time on thy dainty head
  Hath but blessed it, and so passed by.

For the golden years have fled to the past,
And indeed, if truth must be told,
While the wheel spins bravely, the flax wears fast,
And love, we are growing old.

We are growing old. Oh! the morn was bright,
And rich was the noontide ray,
But the sunset hour with its fading light,
Is the sweet of the summer's day.

And though spring be so fair, with her laughing eyes,
Like a maid in her early bloom,
There's a holier calm in the autumn skies,
When the harvest is gathered home.

And a task is in store for the mountain rill,
Though its youth be so fresh and free,
It must fatten the pasture, and feed the mill,
Ere it steal to its rest in the sea.

For onward, onward, the river flows,
And widens by the way—
And many a noble reach it shows,
And many a sunlit bay.

Calmer, and broader, and seaward still,
Till headland and cape be past;
And the stream that was once but a trickling rill,
Is lost in the deep at last.

We must all float on with the silent stream,
Float out to the silent sea,
Where the soul wakes up from a restless dream,
In the hush of eternity!

"SOUL MUSIC"

I KNOW I have heard them sing, child, and I
know that they spoke to me,
With my mother's arms about me, while I sat
on my mother's knee;
And she told me of love that saved us, and a
Father we had on high,
And the grave that we need not fear, child,
and the soul that can never die.
In the gleam of the summer lime-trees, in the
glow of the summer's day,
And I heard them singing faintly then, for
they seemed so far away.

Again, when I walked with the loved one;
you remember the loved one, dear,
And the smile that is gone from among us,
and the voice we no longer hear,
The voice was so tender and earnest, that joy
was too deep for mirth,
And the heart was too full for speech, child,
and heaven had come down on earth.
Not a drop in the cup seemed wanting, the
thirst of a life to fill,
And farther and fainter the song died out—
but I heard the angels still.

Then the loved one was taken from me, and
I bowed my head in my hand,
For my bark was free on a silent sea, and I
was alone on the strand;
The day had gone down for me, child, the
light of my life was fled,
And I longed for the sleep of an endless
night, and to lay me beside the dead.
Then I clung to the arm that smote me, with
a prayer from a bended knee,
And my heart climbed up to meet the song—
and the song floated down to me.

I have heard it so often since, child, at church
on the holy morn
When the music swells, and the praise goes
up, that "to us a Child is born."
And here in the hush of my home life, and
there where the little ones play,
And once in the tremble of twilight at the turn
of the night and the day;
Each time they sing in a sweeter strain, they
call in a clearer tone,
And I look for the Reaper to house the grain,
and the Master to claim His own.

I think it will not be long, child, they are bid-
ding me home at last,
To the place where the joy of the future shall
be linked on the love of the past—
Where the houseless shall seek a shelter, the
lonely shall find a friend,
Where the heart's desire shall be granted that
hath trusted and loved to the end;
Where there's fruit in the gardens of heaven
from hopes that on earth were betrayed,
Where there's rest for the soul life-wearied, that
hath striven, and suffered, and prayed.

MARY-HAMILTON

THERE's a bonny wild-rose on the mountain side,
Mary Hamilton.
In the glare of noon she hath drooped and died,
Mary Hamilton.
Soft and still is the evening shower,
Pattering kindly on brake and bower,
But it falls too late for the perished flower,
Mary Hamilton.

There's a lamb lies lost at the head of the glen,
Mary Hamilton.
Lost and missed from sheiling and pen,
Mary Hamilton.

The shepherd has sought it through toil and heat,
And sore he strove when he heard it bleat,
Ere he wins to the lamb, it lies dead at his feet,
Mary Hamilton.

The mist is gathering ghostly and chill,
Mary Hamilton.
And the weary maid cometh down from the hill,
Mary Hamilton.
The weary maid, but she's home at last,
And she trieth the door, but the door is fast,
For the sun is down and the curfew past,
Mary Hamilton.

Too late for the rose, the evening rain,
Mary Hamilton.
Too late for the lamb, the shepherd's pain,
Mary Hamilton.
Too late at the door the maiden's stroke,
Too late the plea when the doom hath been spoke,
Too late the balm when the heart is broke,
Mary Hamilton.

LOVE'S PEDIGREE

WILD Folly, certain legends tell,
  Was wedded to a maid,
A dusky maid that loved to dwell
  In drowsy summer shade.

Their offspring is a fairy elf,
  A thing of tricks and wiles,
He plays with hearts to please himself,
  And when they break he smiles.

Unpitied pain, and toil in vain,
  That little tyrant brings;
And those who fain would slip his chain
  Must cheat him of his wings.

To Cupid's torture, you may guess,
  Each parent lends a part,
The chain, the toil, from Idleness,
  While Folly adds the smart.

THE KILL

CATHCART'S HILL

IN MEMORIAM

ONCE again we rally, comrades,
Comrades of the old brigade!
Welcome to the triple badges,
Star and Thistle and Grenade.
Once again we take our places,
Once again the healths we fill,
But we miss remembered faces,
And we think of Cathcart's Hill.

Round the circle jests are passing,
Stingless gibe and harmless jeer,

Some are laughing, some are quaffing,
Mirth is half the soldier's cheer;
Loudly ring the glad young voices,
But a whisper soft and still,
Bids the heart that most rejoices,
Spare a thought for Cathcart's Hill.

Needs no colour waving o'er us,
Many a hazard to bring back
Of the bivouac and the leaguer,
Of the trench and the attack.
Seems again the Advance is sounding,
And the minié whistling shrill,
Batteries playing, mortars pounding,
On the slopes by Cathcart's Hill.

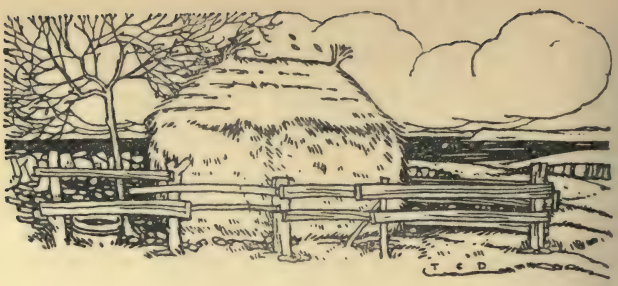
How those colours have been carried
Needs no verse of mine to tell;
How the loyal rallied round them,
How the brave beneath them fell.
Laurel wreaths are snatched by glory,
Dripping from a crimson rill,
Some are here to tell the story,
Some are there on Cathcart's Hill.

Oh! the merry laughing comrade!
Oh! the true and kindly friend,

Glowing hopes and lofty courage,
Love and life, and this the end!
Yet a balm from grief we borrow,
Though the eye with tears may fill,
Half is pride and half is sorrow,
While we speak of Cathcart's Hill.

Noble names, devoted nobly,
High ancestral deeds to share,
Lowlier valour, waged as freely,
All alike are mouldering there.
Homes are lonely yet without them,
Women's hearts are aching still,
Though a glory hangs about them,
In their graves on Cathcart's Hill.

While a soldier's name is honoured,
While a soldier's fame is dear,
Nowhere shall they be forgotten,
Least of all, forgotten here.
In the roll of those who perished,
England's mission to fulfil,
None more proudly, fondly cherished,
Than the dead of Cathcart's Hill.



"AVE CÆSAR! MORITURI TE SALUTANT!"

WINE in thy visage, roses on thy brow,
Thine arm begirt with blazing clasp and gem,
Patricians, Commons, eager but to bow
And kiss thy garment's broad and crimson hem.
Barbarians, Romans, shouting Hail! and thou,
Th' Imperial lord of earth, and us, and them,
Great patron! hearken to thy swordsmen's cry,
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!"

No Eastern slaves, the dainty fan to hold,
No satraps we, the jewelled train to bear,
Nor gaudy guards with helm and shield of gold,

Nor silken eunuchs, plump, and smooth, and
fair;
But champions of the arena, firm and bold,
Men prompt to strike, as they are loth to
spare;
Those fiercest fight who have not where to fly,
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!"

A hopeful sight, forsooth! a gallant show!
Piled to the top in heaps, they sit and
stand,
Rank upon rank, and row succeeding row,
A sea of faces turned to greet our band.
Aloft the canvas awning; and below,
The dazzling sweep of white and thirsty
sand;
Far above all, a blue and laughing sky,
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!"

And now the bounds are set, the match is
made,
One shakes the prong across his shoulder
bare;
In beaded folds the dangling net is laid;
Close at his elbow stalks his deadly pair,

Armed with the vizored helm and gleaming
blade.
An hundred more are boasting, jesting
there,
Mirth on the lip, defiance in the eye;
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!"

The air is sick and tainted, well I know
Behind yon boards the Libyan monster lies,
Yawns for his prey and yearns to reach his foe,
With dripping maw, and sullen, sleepless
eyes;
Soon loud applause to dumb suspense shall
grow,
When man and brute are grappling for the
prize,
The tiger and the swordsman—he and I—
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!"

The time draws near—even now I seem to
feel
The reeking gash—the torn and dragging
limb—
Though to his heart I drive the quivering
steel,

What boots an athlete's arm to cope with
him?
Beneath that crushing gripe my senses reel,
White forms and whiter faces round me
swim,
Paler and paler, fading ere they fly,
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!'

A goodly lot is ours, in truth, who drive,
To please a cruel mob, the swordsman's
trade,
Resting to drink, and roused again to strive,
We drop the beaker, but to grasp the
blade.
In death derided, pampered when alive,
To fill the gaps by wanton slaughter made;
Gaps that a later brood must still supply,
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!"

I have a fair young wife at home—and he,
A loving mother; and Rufellus leaves
Two bright-haired urchins, reaching to his
knee;
With every stroke some kindred bosom
grieves.

'Tis sad to hear the shouts—'tis sad to see
How few the fallen a Roman crowd re-
prieves;
In grim despair the prostrate champions lie,
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! we are here to die!"

To-morrow where shall be the long array,
That now defiles so bravely past thy throne?
The victims and the heroes of to-day!
Yet comes to-morrow not for us alone.
The bow is bent, nor Jove himself can stay,
Nor fate recall, the shaft that once had
flown;
And ours hath struck, and thine is hovering
nigh:
"Good-morrow, Cæsar! all are here to die!"

YSONDE WITH THE WHITE HAND

TRISTREM lies desperately wounded. The gangrene becomes daily worse, and can be cured by none but Ysonde of Cornwall. Tristrem dispatches Ganhardin to Ysonde, with his ring as a token, directing him to communicate to the queen the extremity of his distress. He desires him to take with him two sails, one white and the other black; the former to be hoisted on his return in case Ysonde should accompany him to Brittany, and the latter if his embassy should be unsuccessful. Ysonde of Brittany overhears the conversation, and resolves to be avenged of her husband for his infidelity. Ganhardin goes to England disguised as a merchant. Ysonde disguises herself, and accompanies Ganhardin on board ship to undertake Sir Tristrem's cure. They approach the coast of Brittany displaying the white sail. Ysonde of Brittany perceives the vessel, and knows from the token of the white sail that her rival is on board. Fired with jealousy, she hastens to Sir Tristrem, and tells him the ship is in sight. He conjures her to tell him the colour of the sails. She informs him they are black, on which, concluding himself forsaken by Ysonde, Tristrem sinks back in despair and dies. Ysonde of Cornwall arrives learns the death of her lover, and expires for grief.

["Sir Tristrem." Abridged from the French metrical romance in the style of "Tomas of Erceldoun," by Sir Walter Scott.]

YSONDE

"YSONDE of Brittany
With the white hand,
Cleaving the western sea,
Coasting the strand,
Look if a ship there be
Sailing to land,
Ysonde of Brittany,
With the white hand!"

"Red in the western sea
Sinketh the sun,
Never a ship to thee
Saileth but one.
Love on her deck may be,
Leechcraft is none;
Husband, so false to me,
Ill hast thou done!"

"Ysonde, my troth and plight,
Are they not thine?
Wife, lest I die to-night,
Read me the sign.
Sail hath she black or white
Dipping the brine?
Read me the truth aright,
Fair wife of mine!"

"Black as the raven's wing
Flouting the slain,
Black as the cloud in spring
Breaking to rain;
Black as the wrongs that fling
Shame on us twain,
Flappeth her sail to bring
Succour in vain!"

Drooped his unconquered head,
Paler he grew,
Death on his marriage-bed
Held him, he knew.
Word of reproach, he said,
Never but two,
Breathed, while the spirit fled,
"Ysonde—untrue!"

Ysonde of Cornwall, see
Heart-broken, stand,
Tristrem was dead ere she
Leaped to the land.
Lulled may thy vengeance be,
Deftly 'twas planned,
Ysonde of Brittany
With the white hand!

T C D

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